

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday September 13. 1711.

HE That can think on the Calamities of his Fellow Creatures without any Concern, ought to be very sure the turn shall never be his own—— The Accounts we have had by every Post, of the terrible Desolations which have been in the Great and Populous Cities of the North, such as *Warsaw, Elbing, Danisick, Conningsburgh, Stockholm*; and the Countries about them, have been very terrible, and have given us matter of Sympathetick Pity, for the poor People, for two or three Years past; but nothing comes up to the sad Accounts we have from *Copenhagen*, and from the Town of *Biseneur*, and the Country

thereabouts: To move your Thoughts a little in this Case, and prepare you, in some measure, for that which I have long believ'd, and do still, will be your own Case, 'ere long; give me leave to abstract to you some Accounts which I have had from those Parts, relating to the Dreadful Visitation, the Kingdoms of *Danemark* and *Sweden* are at this very Time under the Affliction of—— The Accounts I am to give you the Abridgment of, come immediately from *Copenhagen* to *Hamburgk*, and whether publick in *Hamburgk* or no, I cannot tell.

This

This was Written soon after the Defeat of the Danes at *Helsingburgh*, and from a *Danish* Prisoner in *Schonen*, to his Friend at *Copenhagen*.

S I R,

YOU have had too soon, the News of our Defeat near *Helsingburgh*, and that our Regiment which was in the Right, was entirely broken by the *Swedes*; I do myself the Honour to give you an Account that I am a Prisoner in the *Swedish* Army; your Kinsman *Jean Runkle*, and my very good Friend, reciev'd a Shot in his Loins, which was not judg'd Mortal, but the Prisoners being oblig'd to Travail, tho' they allow'd him a Sledge, yet the Torment of his Wound gave him the Favour, and he is dead: We cannot say we are very ill handl'd of the *Swedes*, but we are reduc'd here to a miserable Condition, in common with our Enemies; for the Plague which spreads all over the Country, is in the City where we are, and is among the Prisoners; the Officers that have the Guard of our Prison, are dead of it, and the Soldiers fly from it, so that we may quit our Prison when we please, but know not whither to go; the Town is desolated by the Distemper, and in the Villages on the Road, the dead Bodies in many places lie unburied; the People that remain, flee away into the Woods, where many Perish daily with Hunger and Cold—Our distress is inexpressible, and we expect every Day to perish here, either with want, or by the Plague; several of our Men have died of the Plague, others are escap'd away; I pray God they do not find means to get passage Home, and bring the Distemper into our own Country.

Your dying Friend,

Henrik Boxthuys.

From *Lund* in *Schonen*.

This Account has this in it remarkable,

that the Thing this Gentleman fear'd, indeed follow'd; for the *Danish* Prisoners were the very People who brought the Plague over from *Schonen* to *Elfseneur*, where it first broke out—All possible care had been taken to prevent it, and the Prisoners who came Home, were kept at a House a Miles distance, and not suffer'd to come into the Town of *Elfseneur*, till they had continu'd 60 Days in that Place, yet all was in vain—As by the following Letter.

Copenhagen, April 18.

S I R,

WE are extremely Alarm'd here, with the Plague being broke out at *Elfseneur*, notwithstanding all the Means us'd to prevent it—it is next to impossible to prevent its reaching this Place, which if it should do, we shall be in a miserable Condition; nor have we the common Relief of other Places, for this City has been so healthy, that altho' it be the King's Residence, here is but one Apothecary, and when the King is Abroad, not one Physician in the City—His Majesty has caus'd *Elfseneur* to be entirely Invested with his Cavalry, as if it were to be besieg'd; they may permit any one to pass thither, but no Person of any Age or Condition can come back—They recieve all Quantities of Provision, as Corn and Cattle, which being carried to a Village within a Mile of the Place, is set down at the King's Charge, and then the Persons carrying it, retreat, and it is fetch'd by the Inhabitants; the Accounts of the Misery of the Inhabitants is inexpressible, and the dead Bodies are frequently found floating in the Sea, which it is suppos'd for want of help to Interr them: They write from the Guard that Invests them, that they believe the whole Body of Inhabitants will die, and that they do not fetch above half the Provisions they used to take.

Yours, &c.

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It seems, tho' the Inhabitants of *Elfsneur* suffer'd great hardships by this severe Restraint, having not been allow'd to flee for the safety of their Lives, yet all the Caution that was possible to be us'd, could not prevent the spreading the Distemper, and it was the general Opinion, that the very Guards of Horse that were plac'd to prevent the People flying into the Country, brought the Distemper with them; others said, that some of the People of *Elfsneur* in their Desperation, put themselves in a Boat, without Masts or Sails, and put to Sea, and were after driven on Shoar at another part of the Island of *Zeeland*, where they all perish'd, except three, no Body daring to relieve them; that these three made their escape incognito, as was thought, to *Copenhagen*, and could not be found out — Be that as it will, it is certain, that about the beginning of *May*, when the Weather began to be hot, the Distemper broke out in *Copenhagen* — The first appearance of it, was, that abundance of People were found to drop dead suddenly without any notice, at their Trades, in their Houses, and often in the Streets — Then it began with a sudden Sickness in the Stomach, and a Swimming to the Head, which was immediately follow'd with a burning Heat, Convulsions and Death; of this, take the following Abstract of a longer Account from *Hamburg*, Written to a Merchant of *Amsterdam*.

Hamburg, August 22.

Our Accounts from *Danemark* are Amazing and Dreadful beyond Expression: The Distemper broke out at *Copenhagen*, in the beginning of *May* — It is not to be describ'd but by themselves; our Physicians say it is a new kind of *Plague* which Heaven has sent, differing from what was ever known, that Physick may be render'd Useless, and the Physicians not know what to apply — The People fall dead in the Streets and Shops, without a Minutes warning — Others taken with Vomiting, fall into Raging Madness and Convulsions, and die, as in a Calenture; some with swim-

ming in the Head, fall down as in Vertigo's and Apoplexies, and with violent Pains in the Head, attended with a burning Fever, die in two or three Days — They are in great distress for want of Drugs and Physicians; some were at first sent from hence by the King of *Danemark*'s procuring, but several of them are dead, and no Man will now venture. During the Months of *May* and *June*, the Numbers which died were not great; the Principal Inhabitants, however, remov'd to their Country Seats, and the King being to March on his Expedition for *Pomerany*, the Court is remov'd to *Rensburgh*, from whence the Queen Dowager is gone to *Lubeck*, and purposes to remove up the *Elb* to *Magdeburgh*, the Queen Regent is going to *Gluckstadt*, this City having excus'd themselves, &c.

About the beginning of *July*, the Distemper increas'd to that degree, that the Principal Inhabitants began to flee every Way they could; on the 16th of *July*, there died 1600 in one Week, and by the City Account, about 9000 People had been bury'd in all; from that time, it continu'd to increase to such a height of Fury, that from the 13th to the 21st of *August*, there died 3100 People: It is now spread into the Villages and Towns about, both in the Isle of *Funen*, as well as that of *Zeeland*, whither the distressed Citizens fleeing for safety, carry'd the Distemper with them — And in some Villages, the whole Body of the Inhabitants are fled away, none being left to bury the dying People they left behind, which still helps to heighten the Infection; Multitudes fleeing away, and the Towns in their Way not daring to receive them, die in the Fields and in the High-Ways, crying piteously for relief, but none can help them; nor will any venture to carry Food to them, who are fainting and perishing, as well for want of Sustenance, as with the Distemper.

The Accounts of the Numbers already dead in the City, amounted *August 21*, to 19750 Persons, not including the adjacent Parts, which it is thought are not many fewer; nor is there yet any visible Abatement

ment of its Fury ; the last Week, having, as above, buried as many as ever, which considering the abatement of the People, implies, that the Fury of the Distemper rather encreases than abates.

The Ministers of the several Churches do their Duty very much to their Commendation, not one of them having fled away, and but one of them has died, tho' they daily visit the People Infected, and this is all the Consolation the Sick can have, for

Physicians they have none — The poor People flock to the Churches every Hour, and many are taken up from their Knees stone Dead, yet they do not refrain their Devotions in the publick Places — The Person who writes the Account from *Copenhagen*, concludes with the Text which one of the *Lutheran* Ministers Preach'd from, to the People : *Have Pity upon me, have Pity upon me, O ye my Friends, for the Hand of the Lord hath touch'd me.*

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